

APPENDIX A. GENERAL EDITORIAL RULES

1. **Reference Books.** The books listed below are the references that will be used by HOAES for correspondence:
 - a. The latest **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** published by G & C Merriam Company of Springfield, Massachusetts, should be consulted as a first reference. The second source consulted should be the latest **U. S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Style Manual**. When consulting a dictionary, the first entry (or the preferred usage) will be used. The **GPO Style Manual** is also available on line at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/index.html>
 - b. The following reference book will be used by HOAES and the program office writers for correspondence to be signed in the OST. Program office writers should have a copy of this publication.

The Elements of Style, Third Edition, William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White.
 - c. Many other useful reference books are available from bookstores. One recommendation is:

The Gregg Reference Manual, Ninth Edition.
2. **Abbreviations.** Shown below are just two examples of specific FHWA abbreviation usage. Use the dictionary and the **GPO Style Manual** for other abbreviations.
 - a. When citing the United States Code (U.S.C.) in an abbreviated form, FHWA uses: 23 U.S.C. 101.
 - b. When citing the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in an abbreviated form, FHWA uses: 19 CFR 341.
3. **Capitalization.** The **GPO Style Manual** will be the reference book. Within the FHWA, certain words are always capitalized. Following is a listing of those words:

Act is capitalized when used with the full title or number of an act. When you refer to the same act later in the letter or paragraph without the full title or number, it becomes "the act."

Agency is capitalized when part of name; capitalized standing alone if referring to a Federal unit.

City is capitalized if it is part of a corporate or popular name, such as "New York City"; if not, it is read as city of "New York."

County is capitalized when referred to as “Frederick County”; if not, it is read as “county of Frederick.”

Department is capitalized when referring to the Department of Transportation or any other Cabinet level Department.

Division is capitalized when referring to a specific division or making reference to a specific one, i.e., “The New York Division Office will host a dinner for its secretaries on April 25. The Division [reference back to a specific Division] would like to invite all secretaries and their spouses to dinner....”

Federal is always capitalized when referring to the Federal government. Do not capitalize “federally.”

Federal Aid Highway Act of 1970 is always capitalized; but, Federal-aid highway project and Federal-aid highway program are not.

Federal Lands Highway Program is always capitalized as it is a specific program under the Federal-aid highway program.

Forest is capitalized if it used to describe a Federal area. Example: the Modoc National Forest; but not “the national forest.”

Headquarters and/or Washington Headquarters is capitalized when referring to a Washington, DC, organization or office.

Interstate System of Highways and the following forms of Interstate are always capitalized: Interstate System, National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, National System of Interstate Highways, and Interstate Highway System.

Office is capitalized only when capitalizing Division or when referring to an office; i.e., the Office of Information and Management Services.

Nation is always capitalized when referring to the United States of America or any foreign entity. However, national and nationwide are never capitalized.

State(s) is always capitalized when referring to any of the fifty States of the Union. When referring in general to a State highway agency, the word State is capitalized; e.g., “The State highway agency will meet with you... But, Maryland State Highway Administration officials are meeting with the Federal Highway Administrator to discuss DBE procedures.” The word “statewide” is never capitalized unless it is at beginning of a sentence.

4. **Compound words.** The reference sources are the latest **GPO Style Manual** and the latest **Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary**.

5. **Corrections.** With the use of computers, there should be no erasures on FHWA correspondence.
6. **Use of name and title in body of correspondence.** When using a person's name and title in the body of correspondence, use either of these samples. Be consistent throughout the correspondence.

Division Administrator John Brown, or Mr. John Brown, Division Administrator

7. **Punctuation.** Special rules of punctuation used in the FHWA are:
 - a. When using the full date line in a sentence, commas are used to separate the date and the year; i.e.,

Thank you for your letter of January 30, 2003, concerning...

Do not type the month on one line and carry the date to the next; i.e., January 30, 2003.

- b. When a city and State reference is used in a sentence, commas are used to separate to separate the city and State; i.e.,

The meeting took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on January 30, 2003, at the Hilton Hotel.

Do not split a two-word city or two-word State between lines; i.e.,Silver
Spring,.....New
Jersey

8. **Spelling preferred in FHWA.** Reference sources on spelling will be the latest **Webster's Collegiate Dictionary** and the latest **GPO Style Manual**. When two spellings are given, the first spelling is the preferred usage. Do not forget the spell check feature on the computer.
9. **When not to divide a word.** Do not divide a word in the following instances:
 - a. At the end of the first line of any paragraph.
 - b. At the end of more than two consecutive lines.
 - c. At the end of a page or on the next to last line of a paragraph.

- d. At the end of a line when the part begun there does not suggest the whole word.
Example:

counter-offensive, not coun-teroffensive

- e. Between a one- or two-letter initial syllable and the rest of the word. Examples:

identify around behavior

10. **Informal Notes.** When a formal or an informal note is received from the Federal Highway Administrator's staff or any office requesting action or information, a copy of the note will be returned to the writer with the reply.